

FLIGHT JACKET

Vol. 8, No. 19

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

May 12, 2006



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Moving wall 'heals' veterans



A somber Vietnam War veteran is comforted May 6 by a fellow visitor to the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall at the San Diego Veterans Museum and Memorial Center at Balboa Park. The traveling three-quarter replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. was created by Dignity Memorial as a service to those who might never have the opportunity to visit the actual memorial in the nation's capital. SEE RELATED STORY, PAGE 6. Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht

Marine pilot reaches 5,000 Hornet hours

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Many times in a Marine's career, personal and professional achievements are made, but the accomplishments are not always landmark moments. Rarer still does an achievement reach a seemingly unattainable level.

For one Marine Corps pilot, when the tires of his F/A-18C Hornet met the concrete deck May 5 it was no ordinary landing. It was a historical moment and a testament to a naval aviation career dedicated to safe flight.

Lt. Col. Harry G. Constant, commanding officer, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 134, Marine Aircraft Group 46, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, has logged 5,000 hours in the F/A-18 since first flying the Hornet in January 1988.

"Five thousand hours is truly incredible," said Capt. Dan Narozniak, pilot, VMFA-134. "He is the first Marine pilot to fly 5,000 hours in the Hornet. Reaching this level of flight with this many hours is just (awesome)."

In a typical career spanning 8 to 9 years, a Marine Hornet pilot commonly achieves 1,000 to 2,000 hours on average, said Maj. Brian Evans, operations officer for the "Smokes" of VMFA-134.

"It's not the total number of hours you have, it's how good you were on your last run and how much you contributed to the success of your last mission," said a self-effacing Constant, who transferred to the Marine Corps Reserves in February 2000.

On hand to certify the astronomical achievement, Boeing representative John Valovich presented Constant with a certificate and a one-of-a-kind flight suit patch to commemorate and signify the 5,000 F/A-18 hours.

"What he has achieved is nothing short of amazing," said Valovich. "Only one other pilot has achieved this many hours in the Hornet, but (Constant) is the first Marine to do so. Given the level of professionalism demonstrated by today's fighter pilots, to fly for this long, and safely, is really saying

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Lt. Col. Harry G. Constant, commanding officer, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 134, Marine Aircraft Group 46, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, logged 5,000 hours in the F/A-18 Hornet following a flight May 5 at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., since first flying the Hornet in January 1988. Constant is the first Marine Corps pilot to reach this level of achievement. Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht

FLIGHT JACKET



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3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



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Public Affairs Chief

2nd Lt. Armando A. Daviu
Internal Information Officer

Cpl. Paul Leicht
Internal Information Chief

Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver
Layout

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Miramar Marine named 2005 'Athlete of the Year'

USMC Press Release

HQMC

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – Sgt. Jeremy Brown and Sgt. Kristin Taft have been selected as the Marine Corps Male and Female Athletes of the Year for 2005.

The pair will be honored at the Marine Corps Sports Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon Ceremony at the Clubs at Quantico, Va. The ceremony is scheduled for July 28, 2006.

Brown, the head of the separations section of the Consolidated Administration Center at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., was a member of multiple All-Marine teams and the first Marine to cross the finish line at the 2005 Marine Corps Marathon. During 2005, Brown won the Silver Strand Half Marathon, Pacific Beach 8k, and several other events in Southern California.

In addition, Brown was the top finisher of multiple 5k

races at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and MCAS Miramar. Brown finished the year winning the MCAS Miramar Cross Country Championship and captured his second consecutive title as All-Marine Cross Country Champion. For his accomplishments, MCAS Miramar named Brown the Miramar Athlete of the Year.

Taft, a supply sergeant assigned to Headquarters and Services Battalion at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, was the starting pitcher for the All-Marine Women's Softball Team and the Marine Corps Base Hawaii Female Athlete of the Year.

During 2005, Taft was a member of numerous local Hawaiian softball teams, leading the base women's team to an undefeated season. Selected to the All-Marine Women's Softball team for a fourth time, Taft led the team to a second place finish at the National Softball Association State Championship in Phoenix, Ariz. In addition, Taft was also a member of MCB Hawaii's women's basketball team.

Troops, families get secure connection

Story by Paul X. Rutz

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Military families will soon have a new and secure way to keep in touch with their deployed loved ones.

"Connect and Join," an Internet-based communications company, provides a forum for military families to keep in touch when their loved ones deploy, said the company's founder and president, Linda Dennis, during an interview at the Pentagon April 25. The multidimensional Web site goes live at the end of this month. Dennis said the Web forum would be available to military families for \$5 per month, half the normal charge.

"We have taken together all of the important elements of life at home and combined them in one portal," she said. "You have your photographs that capture the memories; you have your writing, your journaling, that brings forward the word. Then you have a calendar system that brings forward the little tiny moments that sometimes you forget to say on the telephone or in a letter or an e-mail."

The site also includes suggestions for projects families can make at home and send via the post office, as well as an archival tool for making scrapbooks to keep once service members have returned home.

A former Air Force wife with a background in child education, Dennis said she was inspired to develop the portal after hearing a speech by a National Guard colonel who had deployed to Kosovo in the 1990s. He showed his audience photos of soldiers standing in long lines waiting to check e-mail, noting that often they couldn't download attachments their families had sent. That sparked the idea to create an easy-to-use communications tool that didn't force its users to download large amounts of data and could be viewed any time.

Dennis said her staff of 19 educators has worked 18 months to develop the site, in partnership with University of South Carolina technical experts and psychologists.

They began by talking with focus

groups, mostly military spouses, who built their own family sites using prototype software.

An important part of the development included creating software that is simple to use and requires no formal training. "Kids today are fearless," she said. "They get on and hit the mouse, and they go. But we had in the room 60-year-old women ... who had never used a computer. ... For Connect and Join to be successful beyond an idea, we had to be sure we could train them."

Along with ease of use, the project's major goal is security, Dennis said. Each registration is limited to five users: the family editor, the deployed service member, and three other members. Nothing can be posted for public viewing, and each site is unique to the family creating it.

"It's all private, password protected," she said. "It's just between the deployed soldier and the family members. And the family editor is really the key because the family editor controls all the content."

For more information, log on to www.defenselink.mil.

Miramarks

What do you plan to do for Mother's Day?



Lance Cpl. Kenneth Thompson
Radio technician
MTACS-38

"I plan to send my mom flowers and a gift."



Seaman William D. Johnson
Powerline machinist
VMFAT-101

"If I get to go home, then I'm going to take her out to dinner."

Mother's Day Brunch

A Mother's Day Brunch will be held Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Officers' Club.

For information on prices and reservations, call 577-4808.

H&HS to hold Mess Night

Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, is hosting a Mess Night May 19 at the MCAS Miramar staff non-commissioned officer's club for sergeants and below.

Ticket prices are \$25, which includes seating plus a meal.

For more information, call 577-7995.

Shopping Spree for Spouses

The San Diego Armed Services YMCA and KUSI are teaming up with local businesses to honor a different military spouse each month with gifts and a \$3,000 shopping spree.

Spouses of deployed active-duty service members and parents of two or more children are eligible.

For more information, call (619) 532-8156.

Black Thursday

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Semper Fit Center will be hosting its monthly Black Thursday competition this week from 6 to 7:30 a.m. at the new gym.

This month's competition will be maximum "dips" within one minute. Winners earn cash for their unit as well as bragging rights.

For more information, call 577-4128.

Promotions Briefs

The officer ans enlisted promotion briefs will be held May 15 at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Bob Hope Theater. Officer briefs will be from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Enlisted briefs will be from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. For more information, call (858) 577-4920.

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something.”

Navy Capt. Roger Welch, still on active duty but no longer flying, was the first aviator to reach the 5,000 hour level, according to Evans.

For every 1,000 hours attained in an F/A-18, Boeing recognizes Hornet pilots with a certificate and a flight suit patch to signify their respective feat.

Flying alongside Constant during the flight, Lt. Col. Barry L. Kragel, operations officer for MAG-46, flew the Hornet for the last time. May 5, being the day of Kragel's retirement, was also Kragel's last day in the Marine Corps.

After their successful flight, Constant and Kragel congratulated each other and were greeted by their fellow Marines with VMFA-134 who helped them celebrate the occasion.

For Constant, who was commissioned a second lieutenant in May 1986 and designated a naval aviator in October 1987, flying the F/A-18 remains a challenge.

"This aircraft has always been evolving and changing," said Constant. "It has a good selection of weapons, software, radar and everything has been reworked. The biggest challenge over the years has been to keep up and keep learning. I've just been really fortunate."

Constant has been flying the Marines' venerable, combat-proven fighter aircraft ever since joining his first operational squadron, VMFA-323,



Lt. Col. Harry G. Constant (left), commanding officer, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 134, Marine Aircraft Group 46, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, accepts a certificate May 5 from Boeing representative John Valovich on the flight line at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. Constant has logged 5,000 hours in the F/A-18 since first flying the Hornet in Jan. 1988 and is the first Marine Corps pilot to ever reach this level of achievement. *Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht*

then later serving with Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101, Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 and VMFA(AW)-224. In June 1996 he went to Navy Fighter Weapons School at Naval Air Station Fallon, Nev., and later served as a “Top Gun” instructor there before joining the “Smokes.”

"If you look at that over the span of that time frame, I've just been very fortunate to have worked with outstanding Marines and sailors, and civilians who provide good airplanes as well. That's really

where all the credit goes,” said Constant. “The easy part is getting in and flying the aircraft, the challenging part is for the Marines to maintain it. I learned early on from my first maintenance officer that we can’t turn an engine or fly an airplane without all the work of the maintenance, operations and administrative folks.

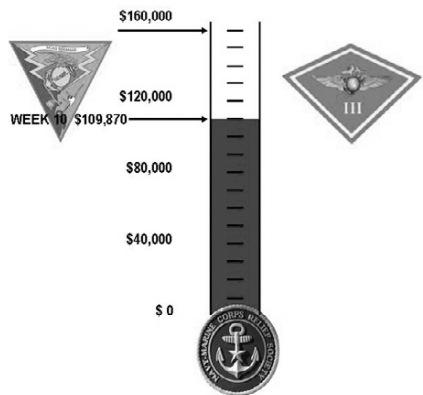
“It’s the Marines down here turning wrenches every single day. As pilots we come down, we sign the books, we fly for an hour and come back, turn the airplane over, but it’s these guys who perform hours and

hours of hard work.”

With this exceptional 5,000-hour achievement, Constant said he hopes it won't be the end of a great ride.

"In the beginning I learned as much as I could from some really great pilots, and I always looked for opportunities all along the way," Constant concluded. "If you can take something away from every person you fly with, whether they are new to the airplane or a veteran, everyone has something to offer. I still think I have a long way to go and a lot to learn."

**2006 Navy-Marine Corps
Relief Society Fund Drive
MCAS Miramar/
3rd MAW Goal:**



**See your unit Key-Person
today for details on how
to contribute!**

Marines see if they ‘have what it takes’

Story by Lance Cpl. George J. Papastrat
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Some Marines may wonder, “What if I was recon?” Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Marines had the opportunity May 5 to answer that question.

The swift, silent and deadly, 1st Force Reconnaissance Company held a screening at MCAS Miramar. Marines from any military occupational specialty from the ranks of lance corporal, corporal and sergeant were eligible for this event.

The MOS of 0321 is commonly thought to be an infantry job; however, any Marine can become part of this elite organization.

Marines who participated in the recon screening had to perform different swimming techniques in the base pool as well as run a first class physical fitness test.

More than seven Marines participated in the screening and all performed at the peak of their physical abilities.

Recon Marines require specialized training ranging from scuba and airborne schools, to weapons training. They use cutting edge technologies to sneak behind enemy lines and gather information without being detected.

At the break of dawn, the team



Marines tread water May 5 at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, as part of the reconnaissance screening held by Marines from 1st Force Reconnaissance Company. Photo by Lance Cpl. George Papastrat

began their screening in the water survival training pool at Miramar.

“We have held recon screenings every month for some time now,” said Staff Sgt. Charles Poulton, operations school staff noncommissioned officer, 1st Force Reconnaissance Company.

These Marines spent over three hours in the base pool, performing tasks such as a 500-meter swim, 25-meter underwater swim, as well as treading water in formation for 30 minutes.

“These screenings are important,” said Sgt. Carlos Salazar, operations

NCO, 1st Force Reconnaissance Company. “We see what they have physically as well as mentally.”

A Marine can fail part of the pool screening, but show heart and determination to pass the screening, said Salazar, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran.

“Reconnaissance is very important to the Marine Corps,” said Staff Sgt. Peter E. Harvey, assistant operations chief, 1st Force Reconnaissance Company. “We work behind the lines to gather information.”

After the Marines finished their arduous training in the pool they hit the pavement for a PFT.

Finally, after over three hours of physical training, the Marines sat through a debrief of what they did during the screening.

If the Miramar Marines are lucky enough to be selected by the screening team, they will receive orders to Camp Pendleton, where they will be sent to a training platoon.

When the Basic Reconnaissance Course has an opening in Coronado, Calif., the selected Marines will be faced with one of the hardest schools the military has to offer.

“It is all worth it,” said Harvey. “I cannot see myself doing anything else in the Marine Corps.”

Entry Control Point, first line of defense

Marines ensure safety for personnel at Al Asad

Story by Lance Cpl. James B. Hoke

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – Waves of heat blur the details out of the sandy road stretching off into the distance, as several Marines remain alert behind their crew-served weapons and surveillance positions.

The Entry Control Point 1 falls under Marine Wing Support Group 37 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward).

The ECP-1 Marines are responsible for ensuring all personnel coming aboard Al Asad, Iraq, are properly searched for contraband, weapons or other threats to service members on the base.

“Our main mission in processing vehicles is to make sure they are clear of weapons, any type of explosives or contraband items as they come through the gates,” said Pfc. Hunter L. Schoot, machine gunner, ECP-1. “We get local nationals, Iraqi police and Iraqi military. They all have to go through the same process.”

According to Lance Cpl. Eric M. Clark, machine gunner, ECP-1, they search every person and vehicle coming aboard using physical searches and X-ray machines.

“We check for bombs,” said Clark, a 22-year-old native of Illion, N.Y. “We take all of their weapons from them. We make sure they don’t have any knives or other M  le objects.”

“Anything that can be perceived or used as a weapon, we don’t let them have it on the base,” he said.

Although the list of threats to look for on approaching vehicles and persons is towering, and the weapons collected each day are returned to the individuals when they depart the base, the Marines at ECP-1 usually have an average of three vehicles to scan per day.

“We had two vehicles today,” said Cpl. Charles W. Kolpack, drop arm assistant noncommissioned officer-in-charge, ECP-1. “I’m not going to expect anymore. Yesterday, we had five vehicles. The most I’ve seen is eight, but we’ve gone two days before without getting any vehicles. So, it is fairly random.”

Most of the traffic trying to gain access are local nationals who offer their services on base.

“We get a lot of regulars,” said Clark, a graduate of Illion High School. “Whenever we see a vehicle that we don’t recognize we start making sure everyone knows exactly what’s going on.”

According to Kolpack, a 23-year-old native of Buffalo, N.Y., vehicles approaching the entry control points give the Marines an adrenaline rush every time.

“For a guy like me who has been in an office for most of his Marine Corps career, it is good to get out here and do the things I haven’t done before,” said Kolpack, a graduate of Frontier High School. “It’s just the danger aspect. Every time a vehicle comes up, we have everyone in place with everything set up. It’s a rush.”

The entry control point also has another group of Marines – the Cobra Team – patrolling the outside perimeter of the base, ensuring that any threats observed outside are intercepted.

“Our mission out here is to protect ECP-1 and

ECP-2,” said Sgt. Steven Gaytan, cobra team commander. “We stop any threats that we perceive before it gets to them.”

“I think it’s a great impact that we have,” added Gaytan, a 27-year-old native of Chicago. “Any activity that we have out here, we intercept it before it gets anywhere near them. We are the first ones out there.”

For the Marines at ECP-1, who have been thoroughly scanning incoming local nationals, Iraqi police and Iraqi military for the past three months, having this particular job allows them to meet a lot of people from this country.

“It is pretty interesting,” said Schoot, a 21-year-old native of Atlanta. “You learn a lot about their cultures out here.”

According to Gaytan, a graduate of De La Salle High School, when the Marines check the Iraqis out of their vehicles or have road blocks, they get to interact with them and see, first hand, the differences between our culture and theirs.

“Some of us have rank insignias and some of us don’t, because they know our rank structure,” said Gaytan. “They know who the officers are and see the ones who don’t have a rank insignia. They’ll open up more to the Marines not wearing rank.”

Although the jobs associated with ECP-1 have the Marines filling roles different than what they performed in the states, they all seem to enjoy it.

“We are all from the air wing,” Clark concluded. “We all work at various squadrons at Miramar and Yuma. It’s something different than what we are used to. Instead of working with electronics all day, we get to play grunt for a little while, and I like it.”



Sgt. Aaron M. Hefner works on an AH-1W Super Cobra April 24 at Al Asad, Iraq. Hefner, a native of Oceanside, Calif., is an aircraft systems technician with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 269. While deployed, the squadron operates under Marine Aircraft Group 16 (reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (forward). Known as the Gunrunners, their mission is to provide constant on-call close air support. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Brandon L. Roach*

‘Gunrunners’ support air, ground in Iraq

Story by Lance Cpl. Brandon L. Roach
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – A distinctive beating is heard overhead as two attack helicopters circle ground forces patrolling the western Al Anbar Province of Iraq.

The slim, grasshopper-like powerhouses and barrel-chested gunships belong to the pioneers of close air combat support, the Gunrunners of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 269, who are attached to Marine Aircraft Group 16 (reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (forward).

Both the AH-1W Super Cobra and the UH-1N Huey, are organic to the squadron. The aircraft, as a team, are capable of distributing massive amounts of firepower to both ground

and air opposing forces.

The Gunrunners returned to their home away from home to once again patrol the skies, after a short five months in the states.

According to the official website for the Gunrunners at www.2maw.usmc.mil, the Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C.-based squadron was activated July 1, 1971, as the first designated attack helicopter squadron.

With 35 years in service, the squadron has been the leaders in several technological advances throughout their time.

They were the first Marine Corps squadron to fire the tube launched, optically tracked, wire guided anti-tank

missile from an airborne platform, the first to fire the sidewinder air-to-air missile and many more.

The Gunrunners have received numerous awards including the Marine Corps helicopter squadron of the year in 1986, 1995 and 1998 for their achievements during operations.

With several deployments to Iraq in their history books, the Gunrunners are now here for the third time in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Their deployment to Iraq will last seven months and they are ready to return if they receive the call.

“Our mission while deployed is to provide (around the clock) on-call close air support and casualty evacuation escorts from Al Asad and Camp

Korean Village,” said Lt. Col. Jon M. Hackett, executive officer, HMLA-269.

“We also support a variety of specific, planned operations including escorts for raids, convoys and reconnaissance missions.”

With an extremely high operations tempo, the squadron has exceeded its re-deployment goals almost two months ahead of schedule. “Although tired, the Marines remain motivated to get the job done,” said Hackett. “They have never let us down.”

With more than 200 Marines deployed to Iraq, the flight of the Super Cobras and Hueys will continue to provide support for air and ground operations during OIF.

War memorial touches, heals many



A woman takes a moment May 6 at the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center at Balboa Park, to remember service members who fell during the Vietnam War. This was the first time since 2004 that the “Moving Wall” was in San Diego. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver*

Story by Lance Cpl. George J. Papastrat
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Vietnam War impacted the lives of many Americans, and this memorial lists by name all those who made the supreme sacrifice.

“In honor of the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War,” reads the Preamble of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. “The names of those who gave their lives and of those who remain missing are inscribed in the order they were taken from us.”

Service members and civilians in the San Diego area had the opportunity to observe the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center at Balboa Park.

The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Brass Quintet performed for visitors. There was also a fly-over by an AD-1 Skyraider, a plane used during the Vietnam War.

This was the first time since 2004 that the “Moving Wall” was in San Diego. The memorial brought along a massive motorcycle escort during the day.

Generations of former and active duty service members were present at the memorial to show their respect as well as mourn the death of their family and friends.

“I am here today with my father,” said Coast Guard Lt. Andrew Hoag, training liaison officer, Afloat Training Group.

Andrew and his father Kenneth Hoag, who was an Army sergeant in the 1st Infantry Division in 1967, mourned together at the lost friends on the wall.

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A flower and candle is placed at the base of the memorial May 6, by one of the many visitors who came to honor fallen service members of the Vietnam War. *Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht*

FEATURE

MEMORIAL, continued from 6

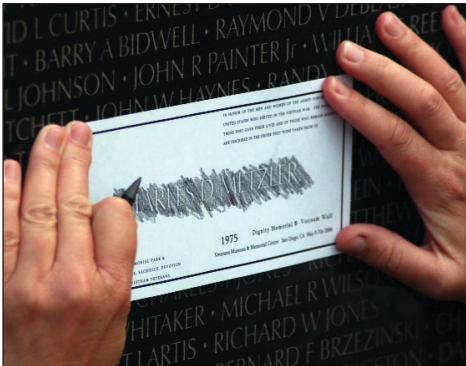
“It’s the best thing they could have done. It gives people a perspective of what happens during a war,” said Kenneth.

The wall has the names of more than 58,000 dead or missing-in-action service members.

The wall went on display for the first time in October 1984 in Tyler, Texas. The “Moving Wall” travels throughout the U.S. from April through November, spending about a week at each destination.

Despite the protesting during the Vietnam War, many people joined the military voluntarily, to serve their country.

“My brother and I went to boot



A visitor etches a name on a piece of paper May 6 from the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center in Balboa Park. The wall has the names of more than 58,000 dead or missing-in-action service members from the Vietnam War. Generations of former and current service members were present at the memorial to show their respect as well as mourn the deaths of their family and friends. *Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht*



A woman touches the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall May 6 at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center in Balboa Park, with hopes of finding any information about her brother who went missing-in-action during his tour in the Vietnam War. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert W. Beaver*

camp together,” said James D. Eads, who was a Marine Corps squad leader during the Vietnam War. “We lost a lot of good men and women during that war. It is important to show our respect to them and their families.”

Showing respect for veterans is something all service members learn in boot camp.

“One of the most honorable parts of our job is being able to play for the veterans,” said Sgt. Jon M. Koshuta, noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Brass Quintet. “It’s about giving them recognition for a job well done.”

The event was well organized, said

Koshuta. “It was just as powerful as the memorial in Washington, D.C.”

Many Vietnam veterans never got the respect they deserved after the war and were frowned upon for years. “This is a healing process for those of us who fought. It was almost 10 years after the war when we got recognition,” said Eads.

Do it cheaper, better at the Auto Skills Center



Cpl. Brian Turner, ordnance technician, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, replaces the air filter on his 1974 Dodge Dart Swinger after making carburetor adjustments. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.*

Story by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Some Marines and sailors prefer to fix their vehicles themselves, but find it difficult to work on their vehicles while living in the barracks.

Some may also not be aware of the Auto Skills Center located at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Building 6673.

The Auto Skills Center is an auto hobby shop that Marines can utilize to fix their vehicles themselves. The shop has a wide assortment of tools and equipment to fix almost every problem that could arise with

an automobile. Whether a Marine needs to change the oil or completely rebuild the engine, the job can be done at the center.

"Not only is it cheaper for the Marines to fix their vehicles themselves, they can learn a valuable skill," said Mike Young, center employee. "Learning basic auto mechanic skills will not only help them have a backup skill in the civilian sector, but also save them a lot of money in labor costs."

Marines sometimes run into problems with having to purchase a special tool to remove or assemble a car part. The center has a wide assortment of hand tools and pro-

vides them at no cost. Also, the center employees are knowledgeable in mechanics and are always happy to lend a helping hand.

"The guys that work here know a lot about almost every kind of car, and they can provide most of the tools you need," said Cpl. Brian Turner, ordnance technician, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. "I have used the center to rebuild my transmission and put on a new intake and carburetor."

The center can provide many services for a very small price. A Marine can rent covered stalls, motorcycle stalls, benches to work on smaller parts, lube and oil racks, maintenance racks, brake racks, and tire spin balancers. The center also has machines for sandblasting parts, steam cleaning engines, testing check engine lights, and battery charging.

"Anyone is welcome to come in and ask us anything about a problem they are having and we will try to steer them in the right direction," said Young.

If a Marine gets stumped on a vehicle problem there is a computer system called All-Data. The All-Data computer allows you to look up the problem on the automobile, and it will break down the maintenance procedure step-by-step. The system will even estimate how long it will take to fix. It is the same system most mechanic shops use.

"Anyone is free to come in any time and use the system to look up a potential problems they may have," said Young.

For more information about the Auto Skills Center, call 577-1215.



The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Outdoor Adventure Center offers Marines and sailors deals on recreation equipment that can sometimes be high-priced when rented in town. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.*

Adventure center offers healthy alternatives

Story by Lance Cpl. Scott T. McAdam Jr.
MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Every weekend Marines and sailors are faced with the difficult, sometimes expensive and dangerous decision of what to do. More often than not, the decision to go to the bar or go shopping is too easy to make. This can lead to a wide assortment of problems involving debt and even a "paid vacation" to the brig.

Marine Corps Community Services provides service members with the means to rent equipment for everything from camping to surfing.

At the Outdoor Adventure Center located at Building 6673, Marines and sailors can rent equipment for healthy extracurricular activity to fill up "down time" in-between work and sleep.

"Not only can you rent equipment here, but we also put together weekend events," said Sonny Pablo, Outdoor Adventure Center employee. "We just completed a trip to Mammoth."

They organize frequent trips on a monthly basis. For more information on when trips are scheduled you can sign up at the center for updates on when and where events will take place.

"One of the projects we are working on now is we are trying to get a surf instructor to come and teach classes on how to surf," said Pablo.

Another planned event is a three-hour workshop and demonstration on fly fishing, scheduled for June 10 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This event and others like it are open to active duty and their dependents, Department of Defense personnel, retirees and guests. The center has flyers available for events planned.

When people sign up for these events, the money they pay covers everything. All of the food, equipment and transportation are taken care of by the center.

"For instance, when we had a white water rafting trip, the transportation to the river, all of the equipment and meals were factored into the price of the trip," said Pablo. "All that we ask is that people bring themselves, clothing, a fun attitude and money if they would like to buy souvenirs."

For more information about the Outdoor Adventure Center, call 577-4150.

www.miramar.usmc.mil

All-Marine wrestler slams competition

Story By Lance Cpl. George J. Papastrat

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Physical fitness as well as professional attitude are things that commonly define Marines. Pull-ups, crunches and three-mile runs, are just a few things Marines do for fun.

It is common knowledge that all Marines have a normal job throughout the day. What most people might not know is that Marines’ extra-curricular activities are often just as intense.

Wrestling is one of these activities. To wrestle, as defined, is to contend by grappling with and striving to trip or throw an opponent down or off balance.

For Lance Cpl. Chris C. Stewart, a crash crewman with Marine Wing Support Squadron 373, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, wrestling is more than a passing extra-curricular activity. It is a passion.

Stewart is a member of the All-Marine Wrestling Team, a group of Marines throughout the Marine Corps who come together a few times a year to compete in tournaments.

Recently, the All-Marine Wrestling Team placed second in the Greco Roman Senior Nationals in Las Vegas, said Stewart, who has had a perfect score on his fitness test throughout his entire Marine Corps career.

There are fewer than 30 Marines who are members of the All-Marine team. They come together once a year to practice as a team. They have long, strenuous workouts, matches and runs, Stewart said.

It is important for these Marines to maintain peak physical condition throughout the year even though they are spread throughout the Marine Corps. It is important for the wrestlers to practice during this time. They have a limited amount of time to train, so they must get the most out of it.

“I recently took leave to wrestle in the National Championship for the All-Marine team,” said Stewart, who



Lance Cpl. Chris C. Stewart, a crash crewman with Marine Wing Support Squadron 373, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, performs a wrestling takedown on fellow MWSS-373 crash crewman Pfc. Nicholis A. Peters, during a physical training session at the Semper Fit Center Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Stewart is a wrestler on the All-Marine Wrestling Team, and trains three times a day. Photo by Lance Cpl. George Papastrat

was a champion wrestler in high school and college.

Until recently, Stewart would workout about three times a day to maintain his physical strength, but he had no wrestling partners to practice with.

“I wrestled in high school and college,” said Pfc. Nicholis A. Peters, a crash crewman with MWSS-373. Peters is currently training with Stewart and hopes to make

the All-Marine Wrestling Team.

Any Marine can try out for the team, said Stewart, as he put on his wrestling gear. It is up to them to have the ambition to be part of the best.

Using the three gyms that are available on base, with their state-of-the-art equipment and personal trainers, Stewart is able to train with the best.

'Red Dragons' rain fiery hell on insurgents

Story by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL TAQADDUM, Iraq – A line of tracers and a corkscrewing missile flash up from the ground a thousand feet below a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter, which immediately takes evasive action. Trailing bright sparkles of light emit from the aircraft's rear section, as a gout of flame spits from its side-door machine gun.

The flying skills of its pilots, the deadly aim of its enlisted crew, and an electronic countermeasure flare system saves the helicopter from enemy fire.

The job of maintaining the M2 .50-caliber machine guns and flares which are instrumental to the helicopter's survival belongs to the ordnance division Marines with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward).

"We are responsible for the (maintenance) of the electronic countermeasures system on the CH-46 Sea Knight," said Staff Sgt. Tiffany M. Guillory, ordnance division chief, HMM-268. "The (helicopters) go out and perform their missions day and night. Every morning and evening we go out to the flight line to remove, inventory and reload the (electronic countermeasure box)."

The ordnance Marines also go out twice a day to the helicopters to make sure the .50-caliber machine guns have enough ammunition.

Because the squadron flies nonstop missions day and night, the ordnance division is broken into two crews of three Marines each.

"Right now, I am on night crew, so when we come in we go through the .50-calibers that are up for their 28-day inspection or just weren't firing correctly," said Lance Cpl. Marco D. Ramos, aviation ordnance technician, HMM-268. "During the inspection or repair process, we're looking for cracks and carbon or dirt buildup."

According to Ramos, a Hollister, Calif., native, the cracks are generally the result of components that are nearing the end of their lifetimes and begin to fall victim to the pounding of the massive weapon.

"We carry all the spare parts necessary to



Cpl. Dustin A. Sansoucie explains the different components of the M2 .50-caliber machine gun to a group of casualty evacuation corpsmen at Al Taqaddum, Iraq, March 25. Sansoucie and five other Marines with the ordnance division, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268, Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward), are responsible for maintaining the electronic countermeasures and M2 .50-caliber machine guns used to defend the squadron's CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters from enemy ground fire. Sansoucie is an aircraft ordnance technician and Bristol, Conn., native. Photo by Cpl. Jonathan K. Teslevich

replace the broken pieces," said Ramos. "The good thing for us is the crew chiefs are so knowledgeable in regards to the weapon's functions that they can usually just hand us the broken part. The .50-caliber gets dirty; it breaks. That's bound to happen, but there is a reason why it has been around for so long and not really changed. It's simply a great gun system."

The machine guns need constant cleaning from the ordnance division after being operated in a desert environment. This is mainly because they are aboard helicopters which

create small dust clouds every time they take off.

"We use (Cleaner, Lubricant and Preservative) to help remove the carbon buildup that comes from firing the weapon, but the CLP residue combines with the dust out here to create a never-ending battle to keep the weapon clean," Ramos said.

In addition to their duties of providing ammo and clean functional guns to the squadron, the ordnance Marines have been giving weapons classes to the Navy corpsmen assigned to the casualty evacuation mission

flown by the Dragons.

"The corpsmen are studying for their Fleet Marine Force test and we are teaching them about the guns," said Ramos. "We explain how to dismantle the weapon, which pieces are prone to wear and tear, and how to put it back together. As a result, they know how to fire the weapon better if they have to take over for the gunners."

According to Ramos, whether they are teaching corpsman, cleaning .50-calibers or replacing flares, the ordnance division does it as one tight-knit team.

Secretary of Navy visits Miramar, speaks on joint-use



Col. Paul C. Christian (left), commanding officer, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, shakes hands with Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter, May 8 outside Miramar's Airfield Operations Building, alongside Maj. Gen. Michael R. Lehnert (right), commanding general, Marine Corps Installations West. The regional commanders met with Winter to discuss joint-use issues affecting the neighboring West Coast installations. After the brief conference, Winter and Lehnert departed for an aerial tour of Miramar and Camp Pendleton aboard a UH-1N Huey from Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd MAW, followed by two CH-46 Sea Knights from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd MAW. Photo by Cpl. Skye Jones

Announcements



Is this your Mustang?

The above vehicle has been marked for impound by the Provost Marshal's Office. To avoid having the vehicle towed, please store it in the Marine Corps Community Services or Traffic Management Office lots. Abandoned vehicles at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar present security risks as well as enviromental and safety concerns. PMS attempts to identify and contact vehicle owners of illegally parked, abandoned vehicles prior to tagging the vehicle with a Department of Defense notice. Vehicles are then scheduled for towing three days following the notice. For more information, call 577-1276/4139.

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information call 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:
Mitsubishi Eclipse	CA#5DAX061
Honda CX	CA#5ERW727
Suzuki GSXR	CA#17E7224
Ford E350	CA#4LNX778
Motorcycle Trailor	VA#CT497383

Miramar Movies

The Bob Hope Theater is located in Building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, call 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Friday:

6:30 p.m. Inside Man (R)
9:15 p.m. *The Hills Have Eyes (R)

Saturday:

6:30 p.m. She's the Man (PG-13)
9:00 p.m. Stay Alive (PG-13)

Sunday:

1:00 p.m. *The Shaggy Dog (PG)
6:30 p.m. *Failure to Launch (PG-13)

Wednesday:

6:30 p.m. Basic instinct 2 (R)

Thursday:

2:00 p.m. Ice Age 2: The Meltdown (PG)
6:30 p.m. Inside Man (R)

* Indicates the last showing for that film.

Mom or Dad Deployed?

The Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Youth and Teen Center is hosting a gathering for children of deployed Marines and sailors every first and third Monday of each month.

Children ages 8 to 10 meet from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m., ages 11 to 13 meet from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. For more information, call 577-1322.

Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office is located in Building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

Wednesday:

7 p.m. Baptist service

Monday-Friday:

11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass

Jewish:

7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

Airman Memorial Chapel

A rededication of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Airman Memorial Chapel will take place in a ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday at 10 a.m. in the chapel courtyard, marking the completion of recent renovations to the Main Chapel, Prayer Chapel and Fellowship Hall.

The chapel is located at Building 8513. For more information, call 577-1333.

Jager Music Tour

The Jager Music Tour and several local rock bands have teamed up to sponsor an Armed Forces Day Tribute Concert to Our Fighting Men and Women May 20 in Ocean Beach, Calif.

Jager will be giving out many door prizes such as T-shirts, poster and hats.

For more information call (858) 869-7849.

HMH-465 Change of Command

Lt. Col. Paul A. Pond will relinquish command as commanding officer for Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, to Lt. Col. Robert Tobin during a change of command ceremony May 19 at 11 a.m. at Hangar 4.